RESERVING THE ECOLOGICAL AND RECREATIONAL VALUES OF FLORIDA WATERWAYS

Robert Swett
Associate Professor
University of Florida

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THE CHALLENGE

Balancing the Use and Protection of Florida’s Waterway Resources
#1 destination for marine recreation in U.S.

Estimated 22 million participants annually

#1 in U.S. in numbers of registered boats – over one million
FLORIDA’S ECONOMY

Output / Sales

- **Forestry**¹ $16.6 Bn
- **Marine Industry**² $14.2 Bn
- **Fruits/Vegetables**³ $12.8 Bn
- **Citrus**⁴ $9.1 Bn
- **Ornamentals**³ $8.9 Bn

Billions

Boating is BIG business in Florida!

²Murray, T.J. Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Gloucester Point, Virginia on behalf of Marine Industries of Florida (www.boatflorida.org)
Florida’s Economy

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Jobs

- Forestry: 133,000
- Marine Industry: 180,000
- Fruits/Vegetables: 125,000
- Citrus: 90,000
- Ornamental: 154,000

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2. Murray, T.J. Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Gloucester Point, Virginia on behalf of Marine Industries of Florida (www.boatflorida.org)
Regional Waterway Management System
For the West Coast Inland Navigation District

A data-driven approach to:
- Promote safe access and navigation
- Protect aquatic resources
- Streamline channel maintenance permitting
The Planning Issue

de facto Waterway Transportation System

1951  1979  1999
A System in Need of a Management Plan
  – Channel Maintenance
Waterway Management Needs

• A System in Need of a Management Plan
  – Channel Maintenance
  – Signage
Waterway Management Needs

- A System in Need of a Management Plan
  - Channel Maintenance
  - Signage
  - Permits and Development Regulations
MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Among

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Florida Sea Grant College Program
and
West Coast Inland Navigation District

Relating to

A REGIONAL WATERWAY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
MOA PRINCIPLES

– Signatories recognize:
  • The high recreational and ecological value of the region’s waterways;
  • A common goal to preserve their recreational and ecological value;
  • The significant use of the waterways by recreational vessels traversing sensitive bay habitats;
  • The need for a science-based management framework to deal with issues associated with the increasing use of the waterways.
SIGNATORY AGREEMENT

• In recognition of the principles, FDEP, WCIND, and Sea Grant (FSG) agreed to implement a **standardized, regional approach to waterway planning, permit review, and project application** using the data and methods developed by FSG and the WCIND and embodied within the Regional Waterway Management System (RWMS).
The MOA signatories recognized the need for a holistic, place-based, region-wide system to deal with waterway issues associated with channel maintenance, habitat restoration, boat traffic, and signage in order to ensure safe and environmentally sustainable waterways for the boating public.
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Ensure safe, environmentally sustainable access to water

• Fit channel maintenance to boat draft needs
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Ensure safe, environmentally sustainable access to water

- Minimize impacts on bay habitats
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

• Evaluate and prioritize management alternatives on a regional scale
• Develop maintenance standards for secondary/arterial waterways
1. Inventory positions and attributes for boats, depths, signs.
PROJECT ELEMENTS

Inventoried:
- Depths for >1,000 Miles of Channels
- ~45,500 Boats
- ~80,000 Moorings
- ~11,000 Signs
2. Analyze boat draft and waterway depth relations to determine the geographic distribution and scope of waterway restrictions.
1. Inventory positions and attributes for boats, depths, signs.
2. Analyze boat draft and waterway depth relations to determine the geographic distribution and scope of waterway restrictions.
3. Produce a geographic information system and map products that contain inventory data, habitat themes, and analytical results for resource managers and policy makers.
Florida Administrative Rule
Chapter 62-341.490

Noticed General Permit with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Figure 1. Tributary Locations
NEGOTIATING THE NGP SCOPE

Lee County

• **Overall Study**
  – 147 trafficsheds
  – 650 overall miles
  – Ignore the outliers

• **NGP**
  – 69 systems
  – 107 miles
  – 14.6 total miles of dredging
POLL & TROLL ZONE CANDIDATES
NGP ADVANTAGES: A COUNTY PERSPECTIVE

• Science based management
• Greater regulatory certainty
• Streamlined process
• Lower pre-construction costs
• Defined public expectations
EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Educational products to promote resource stewardship
THE FLORIDA SEA GRANT BOATING AND WATERWAY PLANNING PROGRAM

Thank You!

Photo Credit: Steve Leukanech